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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5049
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3861
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
AMCONSUL DANANG 761
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2224

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 3647

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TOUR

1. ALL ELEVEN PRESIDENTIAL TICKETS WERE REPRESENTED AT THE AUGUST 21 CAMPAIGN STOP IN BAN ME THUOT. FIVE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES (KY,DZU,KHANH,LY AND QUAT) APPEARED PERSONALLY, THREE (SUU, HIEP AND CO) SENT THEIR VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING-MATES IN THEIR PLACE AND THE REMAINING THREE APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES TO SPEAK ON THEIR BEHALF. NGUYEN VAN CAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE DARLAC PROVINCIAL COUNCIL AND ALTERNATE CAMPAIGN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MILITARY TICKET IN DARLAC, SPOKE FOR THIEU-KS.

(1)

2. DARLAC PROVINCE CHIEF, LT. COL. LE VAN THANH, HAD DECORATED THE AIRPORT, TOWN SQUARE AND SPORTS STADIUM IN THE NATIONAL COLORS,

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AND VARIOUS CAMPAIGN WORKERS PAPERED THE TOWN WITH PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL ELECTION POSTERS. COL. THANH MET THE CANDIDATES AT THE AIRPORT WITH THE BEST AUTOMOBILIES BAN ME THUOT HAD TO OFFER, INCLUDING HIS OWN LIMOUSINE WHICH HE TURNED OVER TO THE CANDIDATES. THANH INVITED THE WHOLE PARTY TO HIS RESIDENCE WHERE THEY FRESHENED UP BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE STADIUM AND THE WAITING CROWD. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF TRUONG DINH DZU, WHOSE REMARKS WERE MORE RESTRAINED THAN USUAL, NONE OF THE CANDIDATES WERE HEARD TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS.

3. AN ORDERLY AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 5,000 WAS ASSEMBLED AROUND THREE SIDES OF A LARGE OPEN SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF THE STADIUM. THE GRANDSTAND ON WHICH THE CANDIDATES AND LOCAL CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS SAT COMPLETED THE SWXARE. IN THE CENTER OF THE OPEN SPACE, TWO PODIUMS FACED EACH OTHER -- THE CANDIDATES SPOKE FROM ONE, THEIR INTERROGATORS FROM THE OTHER. ABOUT 1,000 OF THOSE PRESENT WERE SOLDIERS WHO CONGREGATED ALONG ONE SIDE OF THE SQUARE. ANOTHER 1,000 WERE MONTAGNARDS, DRESSED IN THEIR CEREMONIAL BEST, WHO THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION BROUGHT IN FOR THE OCCASSION. THE REMAINDER WERE VIETNAMES MOST OF WHOM APPEAR TO HAVE COME ENTIRELY OF THIER OWN ACCORD. AS THE AFTERNOON PROGRESSED THE CROWD GRADUALLY DWINDLED UNTIL THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT 2,000 REMAINING FOR THE PENULTIMATE SPEAKER, HA THUC KY.

4. WHILE THERE WAS AMPLE ROOM FOR ANYONE WHO CARED TO OBSERVE THE CANDIDATES, THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION ARRANGED THE ATTENDANCE OF TWO LARGE GROUPS WHO PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE COME OF THEIR OWN ACCORD -- THE MILITARY AND THE MONTAGNARDS. IN DOING SO, THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO GROUPS WHO ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED SUPPORTERS OF THE MILITARY TICKET.) THE CROWD WAS ORDERLY, AND SOMEWHAT UNRESPONSIVE. ZITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW ARTICULATE QUESTIONERS, THE GROUP APPEARED RATHER UNSOPHISTICATED.

5. TY QUOC SINH, REPRESENTING THE CO-SINH SLATE, WAS FIRST TO SPEAK. MAIN THEME OF HIS PRESENTATION WAS, AS USUAL, NECESSITY FOR TOTAL VICTORY OVER COMMUNISM AND NEED TO BUULD A NEW AND DISCIMPLINED SOCIETY. ICJQUESTION PERIOD SINH WAS ASKED WHETHER

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HE WOULD HAVE SOUTH VIET NAM SEEK FINAL VICTORY EVEN IF NORTH VIET NAM PROPOSES PEACE TALKS. HE ADMONISHED QUESTIONER TO REMEMBER THAT COMMUNISTS NEVER NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH; THEY MAY SAY THEY WANT PEACE, BUT REALLY DO NOT. ANOTHER LISTNER CHARGED THAT PHAM HUY CO IS "A FOREIGNER", HAVING LIVED ABROAD FOR MANY YEARS# SINH VEHEMENTLY DENIED IT.

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6. TRUONG DINH DZU SPOKE SECOND. AS ALWAYS, HE FOUND SOMETHING TO CRITICIZE IN MANNER IN WHICH MEETING WAS ORGANIZED. THIS TIME HE REGRETTED THAT PEOPLE HAD TO STAND SO FAR AWAY FROM SPEAKERS' PLATFORM. HOWEVER, DZU WAS MUCH MORE MODERATE IN HIS CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT THAN IS NORMALLY THE CASE. HE WAS ALSO SOMEWHAT MORE HAWKISH THAN USUAL, PERHAPS IN RESPONSE TO HEAVY MILITARY REPRESENTATION IN AUDIENCE. DZU CALLED FOR PEACE "IN FREEDOM, HONOR AND JUSTICE", AND WITHOUT SURRENDER TO COMMUNISTS. DZU THEN SAID THAT SOUTH VIET NAM MUST HAVE MAJOR ROLE IN PEACE TALKS. HE WARNED OF POSSIBLITY OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND NORTH VIET NAM, SIMILAR TO 1954 NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH SOUTH VIET NAM WAS UNREPRESENTED. SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE. DZU OUTLINED PEACE PLANK OF HIS PLATFORM, INCLUDING HALT TO BOMBING OF NORTH VIET NAM (OF UNSPECIFIED DURATION) AND END TO NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIET NAM. HE CONCLUDED BY URGING VOTERS TO USE THEIR BALLOTS WISELY AND RESPONSIBLY. DZU WAS GIVEN AN ATTENTIVE HEARING, BUT DID NOT APPEAR TO AROUSE GREAT ENTHUSIASM.

7. NGUYEN DINH QUAT WAS THIRD. HE REPEATED HIS STANDARD CAMPAIGN SPPECH (RACE AGAINST DIEM, PROPERTY CONFISCATED BY DIEM IN RETALIATION, ETC.). AUDIENCE TREATED QUAT RATHER IMPOLITELY,

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SEEMING TO INJOY HECKLERS' QUESTIONS (INCLUDING ONE TO EFFECT THAT QUAT LOST HIS PROBERTY IN GAMBLING LOSSES RATHER THAN CONFISCATION BY DIEM).

8. NGUYEN THE TRUYEN, REPRESENTING THE HIEP-TRUYEN TICKET,

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FOLLOWED QUAT. TRUYEN READ HIS USUAL SPEECH IN HIS USUAL LIVELY MANNER. HE ELICIATED FAVORABLE THOUGH UNENTHUSIASTIC RESPONDE FROM CROWD.

9. FIFTH TO SPEAK WAS THIEU-KY REPRESENTATIVE, NGUYEN VAN CAN. CAN APOLOGIZED FOR GENERALS' ABSENCE, WHICH WAS CAUSED BY "URGENT MILITARY REASONS". HE PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD COME TO BAN ME THUOT IN NEAR FUTURE. CAN RETURNED TO HIS SEAT. HE WAS NOT TO BE LET OFF THAT EASILY, HOWEVER. DR. TON THAT NIEM, A CENTRAL VIETNAMESE BUDDHIST (AND MEMBER OF DISQUALIFIED UPPER HOUSE SLATE OF DR. NGUYEN DUG TAI), DEMANDED A BETTER EXPLANATION. NIEM ASKED CAN IF THIEM AND KY WOULD COME TO NAB ME THUOT AS CANDIDATES, OR IN THIER CAPACITY AS CHIEF OF STATE AND PRIME MINISTER. NIEN SAID THAT IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THIEU AND KY PLACE "MILITARY MATTERS" ABOVE ALL ELSE AND WONDERED IF THIS WOULD BE PATTERN OF THEIR ADMINISTRATION. HE FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT THIEU-KY CAMPAING PRACTICES HAVE VIOLATED ELECTORAL LAW. EACH OF DR. NIEM'S JABS DREW GOOD APPLAUSE. CAN WAS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THEM, AND CROWD

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SEEMED TO ENJOY HIS UNCOMFORTABLE PREDICAMENT.

18. NIEM WAS FOLLOWED BY A YOUNG MAN, REPORTEDLY A BACKER OF HA THUC KY, WHO SAID THAT IF THIEU AND KY CANNOT FIND TIME TO CAMPAIGN, IT IS THIER OWN FAULT: THEY SHOULD HAVE RESIGNED. HE ALSO WAS APPLAUDED. CAN WAS PROBABLY QUITE HAPPY WHEN HIS FIFTEEN MINUTE INQUISITION CAME TO AN END. DR. NIEM MEANWHILE BECAME TOAST OF THE FROEIGN PRESS CORPS. BUNKER

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5050
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3862
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
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AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2225

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 3647

11. SIXTH TO SPEAK WAS DR. PHAN QUANG DAN. HE WAS IN GOOD FORM. DAN BEGAN BY THANKING PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION FOR EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS THEY HAD MADE. HE THEN POLITELY ASKED POLICE TO "PLEADE DO NOT CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR QUESTIONERS". (DURING DR. NIEM'S PERFORAMNCE POLICE ACTIVETY TRIED TO MAINTAIN ORDER AROUND QUESTIONERS' PLATFORM. THEY SEEMED TO DO IT PROFESSIONALLY AND WITHOUT INCIDENT, HOWEVER. DR. DAN'S COMMENT WAS APPRECIATED BY THE CROWD NONETHELESS.) DAN CRITICZED THIEU-KY NON-PARTICPATION IN JOINT CAMPAIGN, AND WENT ON TO CRITICIZE GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF G N, "ITS DEEDS

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DO NOT MATCH ITS WORDS". FOR EXAMPLE, PRIME MINISTER KY HAS PROCLAIMED HIS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE POOR, BUT IT HAS OBVIOUSLY DONE NOTHING TO DESERVE THAT TITLE. THIEU-KY PERFORMANCE DURING THE CAMPAIGN SHOW THAT THEY DO NOT RESPECT LAW OR OPINION OF

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PEOPLE. DAN THEN SPOKE TO MINORITIES, ADVOCATING UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST BETWEEN MONTAGNARDS AND VIETNAMESE, AND PROMISING ASSISTANCE TO MONTAGNARDS. (DAN WAS FIRST SPEAKER TO SINGLE OUT MONTAGNARDS FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION). DAN THEN TURNED TO FACE SOLDIERS, CONCENTRATED ALONG ONE SIDE OF SQUARE, AND PROMISED THEM BETTER CONSCRIPTION AND PROMOTION SYSTEMS AND VARIOUS ECONOMIC BENEFITS. IN QUESTION PERIOD DAN WAS ASKED ABOUT ALLEGATION THAT HE CRIED IN COURT WHEN SENTENCED UNDER DIEM. HE REFUTED CHARGE, AND ANSWERED SEVERAL LESS CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS. DAN DREW ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE WHEN HE FINISHED.

12. NEXT TO SPEAK WAS COL. NGUYEN DINH VINH, REPRESENTING THE HUONG-TRUYEN SLATE. VINH IS MEMEBER OF MRS UPPER HOUSE LIST HEADED BY NGUYEN VAN TRUONG, AND IS IFORMER PROVINCE CHIEF OD DARLAC. HE IS ALSO A VERY FORCEFUL PUBLIC SPEAKER. VINH BEGAN WITH WARM GREETING TO HIS FORMER COMRADES OF THE 23RD ARVN DIVISION AND DARLAC RF/PF. HE SAID THAT HUONG AND TRUYEN WERE BUSY ELSEWHERE,

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AND THAT HE HAD ASKED TO SPEAK FOR THEM IN BAN ME THUOT. VINH DESCRIBED HUONG AND TRUYEN AS TRUE NATIONALISTS WITH WHOM HE IS PROWD TO BE ALLIED. HE OUTLINED THEIR THREE-POINT PROGRAM (RESTORE NATIONAL AUTHORITY, RESTORE PEACE, BUILD A JUST SOCIETY), THAN OPENED FLOOR TO QUESTIONS. FIRST QUESTION WAS FROM CRITIC WHO REMINDED CROWD THAT HUONG WAS OUSTED AS PRIME MINSTER AFTER ONLY THREE MONTHS, JTD SUGGESLAD TTTTHHAT ITHL
T STRANGE TO CEE #

MILITARY MAN SUPPORTING GIMM VINH SAID THAT HUON/WAS REMOVED BY "FOUR OR FIVE GENERALS", NOT BY ARMY. HUONG OUSTER WAS AN EXAMPLE OF MISUSE OF ARMY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN AGAIN. VINH RPOVED AN EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF HUONG. HE SEEMED TO MAKE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON CIVILIANS AS WELL AS MILITARY IN CROWD. AUDIENCE RESPONDED ABOUT AS ENTHUSIASTICALLY AS IT DID TO DR. DAN.

13. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF HOANG CO BINH FOLLWED COL. VINH. HE PROMISED CROWD THAT BINH WOULD COME TO BAN ME THUOT LATER

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FOR "LONG AND INTIMATE MEETING". HE THEN READ LENGTHY SPEECH. DURING QUESTION PERIOD HE WAS VIGOROUSLY HECKLED TO GREAT DELIGHT OF CROWD.

14. TRAN VAN LY WAS NINTH TO SPEAK. HE WAS GIVEN MORE POLITE RECEPTION, BUT DID NOT AROUSE ANY ENTHUSIASM FROM AUDIENCE.

15. HA THUC KY THEN SPOKE. NGUYEN VAN NGAI APPEARED WITH HIM. NGAI DESCRIBED KY'S REVOLUTIONARY RECORD, AND BACKGROUND OF KY'S RUNNING-MATE NGUYEN VAN DINH. HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS KY, WHO AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR, FREED FULRO LEADER Y BHAM ENUL FROM PRIOSON DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN KHANH. IN HIS SPEECH KY ALSO EMPHASIZED HIS RECORD VIS-A-VIS MONTALNARDS, AND PROMISED BETTER DEAL FOR MONTAGNARDS UNDER HIS ADMINISTRATION. AS USUAL, KY READ HIS ENTIRE SPEECH. NGAI DID MOST OF TALKING FOR KY IN QUESTION PERIOD. KY DID ANSWER ONE QUESTION (ASKED BY LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS SLATE) REGARDING ROLE OF DAI VIET PARTY IN HIS GOVERNMENT. AS IN NHA TRANG, KY ANSWERED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF

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ALL GROUPS. IT WOULD NOT BE A DAI VIET GOVERNMENT. WHEN ASKED KY-DINH POSITION WITH REGARD TO FULRO AND A STATUT PARTICULIER FOR MONTAGNARDS, NGAI REPLIED THAT FULRO WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT MET ASPIRATIONS OF MONTAGNARDS. STATUT PARTICULIER, SAID NGAIWN SHOULD MORE PROPERLY BE DRAFTED BY NEWLY ELECTED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

16. VU HONG KHANH WAS LAST TO SPEAK. HE DID SO TO RAPIDLY EMPTYING STADIUM. BUNKER

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 5097
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3871
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2232
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 3724

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: ELECTION INTEREST AND ACTIVITY MOUNTING

1. WITH 12 DAYS STILL REMAINING IN PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATE CAMPAIGN, PUBLIC INTEREST AND CANDIDATE ACTIVITY ARE MOUNTING, AND THERE IS EVERY PROSPECT OF HIGH VOTER TURNOUT IN AN ELECTION WHICH WE CAN FAIRLY REGARD AS GOOD STEP FORWARD IN DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

2. ELECTION NEWS CONTINUES TO DOMINATE VIETNAMESE PRESS, AND CANDIDATES CONTINUE TO PUT UP ELECTION POSTERS AND REPLACE

(1)

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OLD ONES WHICH HAVE BECOME WEATHER-BEATEN OR DAMAGED BY RAIN AND WIND. VIS POSTERS (PRODUCED WITH JUSPAO ASSISTANCE) DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE CITIZENS TO VOTE ARE ALL OVER SAIGON AND

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ARE INCREASINGLY TO BE SEEN IN PROVINCIAL CAPITALS AS WELL. VOTER INTEREST IN VILLAGES AND HAMLETS STILL FAIRLY LIMITED, SINCE ELECTION PROPAGANDA, DUE TO TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES, HAS GENERALLY NOT REACHED DOWN THAT FAR, AND CANDIDATES HAVE, FOR MOST PART, LIMITED THEIR CAMPAIGNS TO SAIGON AND PROVINCIAL CAPITALS, WHERE BULK OF REGISTERED VOTERS ARE. VILLAGE INTEREST IN ELECTIONS REPORTED TO BE INCREASING, HOWEVER.

3. PREVIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF UNFAIR ACTIVITIES BY GVN CONTINUE, BUT SEEM LESS OF A THREAT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AS CANDIDATES HAVE NOW BEEN ABLE TO COVER LARGE PART OF COUNTRY AND APPEAR TO HAVE HAD GENERALLY GOOD COOPERATION FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF REPORTS WHICH LEND CREDENCE TO CHARGES OF GOVERNMENT PRESSURES ON CAMPAIGN WORKERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS KNOWN TO FAVOR CIVILIAN CANDIDATES. HARD EVIDENCE IS VERY SCARCE, HOWEVER, AND WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE UPROAR OVER ALLEGED UNFAIR CAMPAIGN TACTICS

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MAY HAVE INHIBITED THIEU-KY SUPPORTERS TO DEGREE THAT SUCH PRESSURES ARE STAYING WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS. CERTAINLY WE HAVE MANY REPORTS INDICATING THAT THE HUONG AND SUU CAMPAIGN MACHINES ARE BOTH ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE IN THE PROVINCES. CROWD REACTION TO THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES AT RALLIES IN THE PROVINCES ALSO SUGGESTS THAT IF GOVERNMENT PRESSURES ARE BEING APPLIED, THEY ARE NOT PRT NOT HAVING MUCH IMPACT ON THOSE TURNING OUT FOR THESE RALLIES.

4. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HAVE NOW HELD JOINT MEETINGS IN BIEN HOA (AUGUST 16), QUI NHON (AUGUST 17), NHA TRANG (AUGUST 20), BAN ME THUOT (AUGUST 21), AND TAY NINH (AUGUST 22), ALL OF WHICH SEEM TO HAVE GONE OFF WELL, WITH CROWDS ATTENDING RANGING FROM 2500 TO 4000. IN ADDITION, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE REPRESENTATIVES HAVE HELD SERIES OF MEETING ORGANIZED BY LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES IN MANY AREAS. CANDIDATE REPRESENTATIVES EITHER DELIVER SHORT SPEECHES THEMSELVES OR BROADCAST TAPE RECORDINGS OF TALKS BY THEIR PRINCIPALS.

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5. TRAN VAN HUONG QUOTED IN SAIGON PRESS AUGUST 22 AS STATING THAT HE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED IN PRESS AUGUST 20 AS

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CRITICIZING ME FOR COMMENTING THAT CHARGES OF UNFAIR PRACTICES WERE COMMON DURING AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. HUONG SAID HE DID NOT CRITICIZE ME BUT MERELY STATED THAT HE EXPECTED GENERALS KY AND THANG TO REPLY TO HIS CHARGES OF UNFAIR PRACTICES, RATHER THAN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. HOWEVER, HUONG EVIDENTLY FELT HE COULD NOT BACK OFF ENTIRELY FROM CHARGES OF UNFAIR PRACTICES, SINCE HE HAS MADE THESE CHARGES SEVERAL TIMES. HUONG'S RUNNING MATE TRUYEN CONFINED HIMSELF TO REMARKING, ACCORDING TO PRESS, QUOTE IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT CIA WHICH IS FAMOUS ALL OVER WORLD HAD NOT SUPPLIED TO AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION CORRECT AND TRUTHFUL INFORMATION ABOUT CAMPAIGN UNQUOTE. HUONG WAS A PAINS TO MAKE CLEAR TO EHFEFIDRIVATELY THAT HE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED AND THAT HE REALIZED IT ESSENTIAL FOR SVN TO HAVE AMERICAN SUPPORT.

6. DURING TOURS OF COUNTRYSIDE AND IN CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS, THIEU HAS QUITE CONSISTENTLY REMARKS REFLECTING SOBER, MATURE APPROACH TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. TWO MOST RECENT EXAMPLES ARE THIEU'S REMARKS TO AUDIENCE OF VILLAGE COUNCILLORS IN NINH THUAN ON AUGUST 18

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WHERE HE SAID HE WOULD BE ASHAMED TO WIN A RIGGED ELECTION AND URGED LISTENERS TO DENOUNCE ANY SOLDIERS, CADRE OR MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO UPC PRESSURE TACTICS TO INFLUENCE OUTCOME OF VOTE; [SAIGON 3534] SPEAKING IN ENGLISH TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ON AUGUST 19 THIEU SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO BE RUN UNDER A CIVILIAN PRESIDENT AND HE DEPLORED CIVILIAN-MILITARY BICKERING OF PAST YEARS. THIEU ALSO PRAISED HIS TWO PRINCIPAL RIVALS, SUU AND HUONG, AS GOOD NATIONALISTS. IN GENERAL, TONE OF THIEU'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MODEST AND DIGNIFIED AND RECOGNIZED [illegible] EVEN BY HIS OPPONENTS.

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IN RADIO BROADCAST EVENING OF AUGUST 21 PRIME MINISTER KY SAID THAT FREEDOM ENJOYED BY CANDIDATES IN PRESENT CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING FREEDOM TO CRITICIZE GVN IN FAIRLY HARSH TERMS, IS SIGN THAT SVN IS MOVING STEADILY TOWARDS DEMOCRACY. HE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT PERSONAL RECRIMINATIONS HAD BECOME COMMON AND HE APREALED TO CANDIDATES TO REFRAIN FROM PERSONAL ACCUSATIONS DURING REST OF CAMPAIGN. KY AGAIN STATED THAT GVN OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ENSURE THAT ELECTIONS BE HELD IN ATMOSPHERE OF FREEDOM, FAIRNESS, AND HONESTY. (COMMENT: IT IS A FACT THAT THE PRESS CONTINUES

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TO BE VERY OUTSPOKEN IN ITS CRITICISM, ESPECIALLY OF THE GOVERNMENT.) BOTH GENERAL THIEU AND SCA DIRECTOR TUONG HAVE CLEARLY DENIED THE OPPOSITION CHARGE THAT MILITARY PERSONNEL WOULD BE ENABLED TO VOTE TWICE.

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INFO CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3872
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2233

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 3724

7. NO FURTHER REACTION ON PROPOSAL BY SENATOR JAVITS FOR FOUR-WEEK POSTPONEMENT IN ELECTIONS. PROVISIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MET AUGUST 21 TO CONSIDER LEGISLATION TO EXTEND VOTING HOURS SEPTEMBER 3 DUE COMPLEXITY OF ELECTIONS (COMBINATION OF PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL ELECTIONS). ACTION NOT TAKEN SINCE THERE NO QUORUM, WHICH IN ITSELF EVIDENCE THAT MANY ASSEMBLY MEMBERS FULLY INVOLVED IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER. ELECTION POSTPONEMENT NEVER HAD MUCH SUPPORT HERE, AND THIS ISSUE APPEARS CLOSED.

8. ROLE OF PROVINCE AND DISTRICT CHIEFS IN ELECTIONS VERY INTERESTING. WHILE MANY PROVINCE AND DISTRICT CHIEFS EVIDENTLY

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 3724/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L
FAVOR THIEU-KY AND WILL WORK FOR THEIR ELECTION, EVIDENT FROM REPORTS OF OUR PROVINCIIAL REPORTING OFFICERS THAT BY NO MEANS

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ALL THESE LOCAL OFFICIALS FAV THIEU-KY, DEPTY PROVINCE CHIEFS FOR ADMINISTRATION (WHO ALMOST ALWAYS CIVILIANS) FREQUENTLY FAVOR OTHER CANDIDATES (USALLY HUONG OR SUU). POSSIBLE THAT REALIZATION OF THIS SITUATION, PLUS PROBLEMS FOR ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING, HAS LED THIEU TO INDICATE TO ME CONCERN OVER OUTCOME. FAIRLY LIKELY THAT WINNING TICKET WILL HAVE NO MORE THAN 40 PERCENT OF VOTE, WHICH, FROM POINT OF VIEW OF APPEARANCES, IS BETTER THAN OVERWHELMINGLY HIGH FIGURE.

9. SENATE CAMPAIGN ALSO DEVELOPING RAPIDLY. WHILE MANY ALLEGATIONS THAT GVN SUPPORTINT SIX SENATE LISTS NUMBERS 2, 4, 5, 8, 30 AND 32, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT GVN DOING MUCH ABOUT IT. DANG VAN SUNG, SENATE CANDIDATE (LIST NO. 13), HAS EXRRESSED DOUBT GVN PLANS DO MUCH TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC SENATE LISTS. THE ABOVE ALLEGATION OF GVN SUPPORT MAY BE TRUE BUT THIS SEEMS A REASONABLE ENOUGH ACTION SINCE GVN WILL HAVE TO WORK WITH SENATE.

10. IN TERMS OF ELECTION ATMOSPHERE IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT ACTIVITY IS ALREADY UNDER WAY LOOKING TOWARDS LOWER HOUSE

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 3724/2 C O N F I D E N T I A L
ELECTIONS OCTOBER 22. NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BETWEEN AUGUST 24 AND 28, WITH INITIAL INDICATIONS SUGGESTING THAT THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS 10 CANDIDATES IN ALL. SOME SENATE CANDIDATES HAVE TOLD US THEY ARE PLANNING TO FILE FOR LOWER HOUSE, EVEN THOUGH THEY MUST DO THIS PRIOR TO SENATE ELECTIONS. SEEMS AS IF ELECTION BUG HAS REALLY BITTEN MANY SOUTH VIETNAMESE, DESPITE ALLEGATIONS OF LAST FEW WEEKS.

11. ON WHOLE, PROSPECTS NOW LOOK PROMISING FOR REASONABLY FREE AND FAIR ELEETIONS, THOUGH GREAT DEAL STILL COULD HAPPEN IN NEXT 12 DAYS. RESPONSES TO GVN INVITATION TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT TO SEND ELECTION OBSERVERS ARE SLOW IN COMING IN, BUT THERE APPEAR TO BE GOOD PROSPECTS OF FAIRLY BROAD REPRESENTATION, INCLUDING SOME PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM COUNTRIES SUCH AS JAPAN, AND AUSTRALIA. OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE DEFINITELY ACCEPTED ARE LAOS, NEW ZEALAND, BELGIUM, TURKEY, KOREA. B R

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